000 make a toga.

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241 Since agriculture is a major concern, much of the annual cycle of activities is centered around it. With the onset of the light rains, fields left fallow the years before are redistributed among the members of the extended family of those who work the land. Fathers allocate fields to their newly married sons or to those who have an added child. The matted grass is plowed before the rains start--"tärättära"--plowing to kill the weeds in the sun; then a second, third, fourth time at right angles--"gämmäsä", "däggämä", "sälläsä". Then the turf is piled, dried and burned. The land is now ready, "masa" land", and when puffy clouds appear over the horizon in the morning, the farmer takes his plow to the field for rains will surely follow in the afternoon.

241
●407 The plow is one-handed, derived from the ancient Middle East. The yoke, about 5 feet in length and 3-4" thick ("qämbär") is lowered behind the humps of two oxen. The plowpoint, held in place by two vertical wedges, is attached to the central stick, "manäqo". At first this plow, which is little more than a converted digging stick dragged at an angle, penetrates less than 6 inches, but after about 5 replowings, as deeply as one foot. The plowpoint is flat and cannot turn the earth.

241 Major procedures fall into the following categories:

preliminary plowing - "tällämä", cutting field into furrows, preparatory to seeding. Plow is led around large rocks and ignores small ones, so that

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463 lists such as the ironsmith and tanner; (2) time-consuming work, e.g. pottery, done by women; (3) Unskilled and semi-skilled work that may require physical strength but is not time-consuming or can be done at irregular intervals, and is the prerogative of Amhara men (e.g. work in horn and wood); (4) utensils that may be made by either men or women (e.g. fiber and basket work).

322
[321] Category (3) includes items of wood and horn perhaps because traditional weapons and tools, if they were not of iron, were used by men, warriors, and the low degree technical development did not require a specialist. Ornamentation consists of simple incisions, of rough geometric [531] nature, in the wood. Wooden combs together with their [303] handles are whittled out of a single piece of wood. Wood- [412] en mortars, that may be hip-high, are carved laboriously out of treetrunks by a combination of carving with adze and the use of fire. The pestle is carved, also by men, from a somewhat longer, arm-thick hardwood branch. On [354] occasion one finds a three-legged, bowl-like stool carved by hand with adzed and knives, probably in imitation of the Galla, for the typical Amhara chair of nobles and bishops is a higher hardwood frame with a seat and back- [407] rest of interlaced oxhide. The wooden plow, one-handed, consists of a long, stout stick ("erf"), at the bottom end of which wooden wedges ("deger") hold the plowpoint [231] firmly in place. A lighter yoke called "jengela" is made for young and not fully grown oxen. All tools are collectively known as "eqa" (lit. baggage).

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415 Horn is largely made into containers, also by men.

412 lower, muddy terrain, e.g. in the Lazaga district of the Wolkait jungle border, digging sticks are used to prepare small holes for mashella seed. But the Amhara peasant prefers to use the plow, even on contours of hills, since the use of the stick is hard labor, requiring several men working in unison. Often the stick must be weighed down with heavy rocks against the sun-baked soil in the dry season.

412 407 The scratch plow probably evolved as an elaboration of the digging stick by fixing it at an angle to a long beam pulled forward by the yoke of two oxen, thus substituting animal muscle power for human energy. Among the Amhara, the bottom tip of the plowpoint is almost always strengthened and protected by an iron plowpoint purchased from an ethnic (Falasha) smith. The sharp angle biting into the soil can be adjusted by means of a suspension binding strap of hippopotamus skin, and two small wedges. The farmer merely has to guide the digging-stick part of the plow, and encourage the oxen with his long fiber whip.

412 303 Knives for kitchen use very in length usually from 8 to 12 inches, are curved, with the cutting edge on the curved side which comes to a point. The blade is set in a wooden handle. Theee knives are also used for circumcision. The old razor blade usually was of similar shape, about 6 inches long, and used primarily for shaping head head hair. It is now replaced by imported European blades. Pincers, 4-5 inches long, are carried on trips to remove thorns from the bare feet. Little ear spoons are suspended from the neck-cord and used to remove earwax, especially by the ladies. [515]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5



When he has eaten and washed his hands, the children take their breakfast quickly. One or two of them then lead the remaining animals out to pasture—the cows, which have already been brought back and milked; the sheep and goats; the young draft animals. They spend the day roaming the hills with their flocks in the company of shepherds from nearby farms, unless it is harvest time when each must stay close to his family's fields where the herds feed on stalks and chaff.

The peasant leaves with his older sons or manservants for the fields. (If it is a fasting day, they go directly to work without any breakfast.) The day's activity may consist of cutting the ripe crops with a fine-toothed sickle, or threshing the harvest under the hooves of cattle and mules, or winnowing grain by tossing it up in the breeze. More often than not it will consist of plowing, virtually a year-round occupation. For each crop a field must be plowed at least twice: first to loosen the crusted soil, and then to cover up the seed that has been sown. Planting occurs in several months, the schedule varying according to region. In some regions, for example, barley, wheat, and chick-peas are sown in September and October; corn, beans, and peas in May and June; and *ṭēff* in July. In many areas a January planting is also common. The central position of plowing in the world of the Amhara peasant is shown by the fact that the word for his vocation, *ǐrshā*, literally means "plowing."

On plowing days, the wooden plow with its single iron share and the yoke are carried to the field, and the oxen are driven along with sticks and shouts. If it is sowing time, bags of seed are loaded on donkeys which join the procession. On his way to work the peasant is likely to see a neighbor at a distance and cries of "How did you spend the night?" are exchanged. At the field the team of oxen is yoked and the work begins. It lasts for about five hours, and the peasant is indeed wretched who does not have a helper with whom to take turns steering the heavy plow and cracking the whip as the oxen trace furrow after furrow.

The peasant's wife is too busy in the morning to sit down for a regular breakfast, so she takes bites of food at will as she works about the house. There is much ado in the house as she and her daughters, and perhaps maidservants, carry out a variety of chores—baking *ǐnjarā*, preparing *ṭallā*, spinning cotton, collecting dung for fuel, sweeping rubbish off the floor, carrying water from the spring, weaving straw baskets or mats. The impression of business is heightened by the chickens, which hop in and out of the house as they please, though they must be shooed away from grain drying in the sun.

Toward noon a fresh batch of pepper sauce is prepared. If the peasant is working in a distant field, his wife carries lunch out to him—or else risks being beaten with a stick. If he is not too far away he comes home for lunch, which he eats together with his wife. They talk about what each has done in